

Highlights His Legislation to Determine if Hudson River Valley Should Be a Unit of the National Park Service

Poughkeepsie, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today welcomed U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to the Hudson River Valley as he toured the region as part of his America's Great Outdoors Listening Tour. The Hudson River Valley was selected as one of only 25 regions in the nation for the tour.

"The Obama administration has recognized the importance of the Hudson River Valley in choosing it as one of only 25 regions in the nation for these listening tours," said Hinchey. "The decision was in part due to the tremendous work that has been done in this historic region over the past four to five decades, during which time we've built an impressive basis and foundation for the protection and promotion of this unique valley."

Hinchey went on to highlight the pivotal role the region played in our country's history and the amazing array of natural, scenic and cultural resources that are spread throughout the area. He also outlined a number of public programs and designations that have helped protect the region's environment and foster a growing local tourism market.

As a member of the New York Assembly, Hinchey helped create the Hudson River Estuary Program in 1987. He went on to lead the effort to establish the Hudson River Valley Greenway, which was created in 1991 and has now grown to include 264 member communities in 13 counties.

As a member of Congress, Hinchey was successful in obtaining a National Heritage Area designation for the Hudson River in 1996 to build on the foundation of the Greenway. In 1998, he successfully worked with the Clinton Administration to obtain the "American Heritage River" designation for the Hudson. And in 2002, New York State enacted legislation creating a state Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission, which worked with the National Parks Service to coordinate educational, cultural and historical projects using the \$1.39 million Hinchey secured from Congress.

This year, Hinchey was successful in passing the Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act in the House to authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park system. As part of the National Park system, the region would benefit from an increase in tourism, additional federal resources and increased preservation efforts that would create jobs and grow the local economy. The legislation now awaits action in the U.S. Senate where a companion bill has been sponsored by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Congressman John Hall and Congressman Paul Tonko, who were on hand for the event, sponsored the House version of the bill Hinchey introduced.